

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510
November 19, 2020

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary of Transportation
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Madam Secretary:

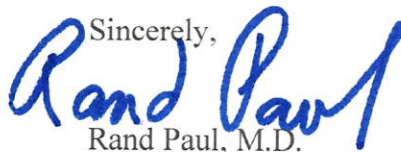
As a fellow Kentuckian, you are well aware that a replacement for the Brent Spence Bridge is a necessity. I write with the hope that we can work together to ensure that the Department of Transportation commits to making the needs of our home state a high federal priority.

As you know, the Brent Spence Bridge is a critical element of our nation's infrastructure. Originally opened in 1963, the Brent Spence Bridge carries both I-75 and I-71 traffic through the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky areas, and serves as a connection point for ten different states. Additionally, it is one of the busiest truck routes in the United States. Simply put, the Brent Spence Bridge is vital for the free flow of people and goods within the United States.

At almost 60 years old, the Brent Spence Bridge is far beyond its intended lifespan. In 1998, the Federal Highway Administration deemed the bridge functionally obsolete. Today, more than 160,000 vehicles cross the bridge, more than double what was originally intended. As the nation continues to grow in population and wealth, the Brent Spence Bridge is clearly a relic that no longer meets the needs of the nation.

Although the need for a new bridge has been apparent for decades, a recent fire that damaged the Brent Spence's concrete and beams serves as a frightening reminder of the need for a replacement. The bridge is now closed until December 23, and commercial traffic is prohibited on segments of I-75 and I-71. As a result, traffic is backed up for miles, choking off commerce and the ability to travel. The importance of replacing the Brent Spence Bridge with a structure that can accommodate our modern economy is obvious.

Although this letter does not provide you with any new information, I am renewing my commitment to working with you to ensure that a replacement for the Brent Spence Bridge is among the highest priorities of the Department of Transportation. In the spirit of our partnership, I respectfully request that the Department of Transportation place the replacement of the Brent Spence Bridge on its list of high priority projects. Once the bridge is replaced, one of the most important segments of our transportation network can fully play a role in ensuring a prosperous future for Kentucky and the United States.

Sincerely,

Rand Paul, M.D.
United States Senator